

*Russian Education and Society*, vol. 54, no. 3, March 2012, pp. 22–42.  
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ISSN 1060–9393/2012 \$9.50 + 0.00.  
DOI 10.2753/RES1060-9393540302

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## The Professionalization of Management

Aims, Obstacles, and Prospects

*Management in Russia is as difficult to define as a profession as it is in other countries, and the question of what education is appropriate for a future manager is also difficult to define. Business schools in Russia need to think more carefully about their curriculums and about what they should be preparing their students for.*

These days, the phrase “professional management” has become widely prevalent in Russia. It is no longer confined to the vocabulary of businesspeople, office holders, and specialists but has migrated into the advertising slogans of companies offering a broad range of services from management consulting and “software support for the automation of business processes” to “the creation of a fully functional design for your kitchen.”<sup>1</sup> Does this have anything to

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English translation © 2012 M.E. Sharpe, Inc., from the Russian text © 2011 the author. “Professionalizatsiia menedzhmenta: tseli, bar’ery, perspektivy,” *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, 2011, no. 7, pp. 26–37. A publication of the Russian Academy of Sciences; the Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, and Law, Russian Academy of Sciences; and the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.

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do with the current profession of manager? Can it be that slogans should not be mixed with professional discourse, but instead any analysis of the formation of professional management should be limited to an examination of management education?

An examination of the scientific treatment of the concept of professions and the experience of the professionalization of management in the West can help us find the key to answering these and more general questions, such as what makes management professional, and to what extent the participants in the professionalization of management in Russia are coming closer to turning management into a profession.

### **Toward a definition of management**

In this study “management” [*menedzhment*] refers to *specialized* activity in the management [*upravlenie*] of *modern* organizations, and, at the same time, to those who manage organizations as active agents [*sub”ekty*] of that activity. The combination of the active agent and the process occurs in the everyday use of the term “organization management,” a usage characteristic of managers themselves and their contract partners. This approach is justified by the fact that the central theme of this article is the analysis of turning management into a professional activity (“professionalization”), a process that goes on with the participation of all interested parties, university personnel and representatives of business, the state, and the public. At the same time, each participant creates his own language, ideas and view as to the prospects for changing management in accordance with what constitutes the content of their immediate activity. Whether the result of their interaction will be to turn management into a profession or, as a result of mixing, it will take on a meaning that is similar to the concept of an engineer but one that applies to the economic disciplines, that is, a broad profile specialist with no definite designation, remains an open question.

The focus of my analysis is the emergence of the profession of managers of business organizations. At the same time, it is impossible not to see that the training of professional managers, originally

intended to meet the needs of big business during the period of industrialization, has also become important for the noncommercial sector as well as state administration, mid-sized business, and even small business. This has strengthened the heterogeneous character of management along with the vagueness of its boundaries. While further analysis and clarification are needed about this development, they are outside of the scope of this article.<sup>2</sup>

What is the specific nature of management? We will use P. Drucker's approach, the best way to approach the interpretation of the professionalization of management. (1) The main criterion for being classified as a manager is "responsibility for the overall input and the results that the company is to achieve," rather than the position of a "chief" who is responsible for the work of others (Drucker 2008, pp. 489, 490). Moreover, the ultimate purpose of the work of both the manager and the company is to satisfy the interests of the consumer. (2) The boundary between the "management group" and the personnel who perform the tasks does not, in many cases, coincide with the administrative hierarchy and the formal filling of positions of leadership. (3) The group of managers in today's organization is not homogeneous. It includes traditional managers who have a large number of personnel under them and are responsible for the work of others; and it includes managers who are "individual investors," who do not occupy positions of leadership or else do not have a large number of subordinates but are responsible for the results of the company's activity in their capacity as experts and "team leaders" (they set the goals and the results of their work). There is an intermediate group whose members may perform the functions of a team leader depending on changing objectives, who perform the functions of management consultants or perform oversight functions in regard to personnel in a specific field (*ibid.*, pp. 490, 493, 494). (4) The considerable efforts involved in highly professional management work are usually concentrated in the midlink of management (*ibid.*, p. 560). (5) An essential condition of that "responsibility for the normal functioning of the organization" is the manager's professional autonomy. This distinguishes this individual from the "leader" who is involved in the framework of his assigned function, while also

distinguishing him from the “career-making professional” who is not concerned about relaying his knowledge to other associates in the organization, since he bears responsibility only for his own work and not for the company’s results (ibid., pp. 475–76, 494). (6) Today, management is going through a new stage, permitting a discussion of its transitional nature and the search for new definitions and conditions of functioning.

### **On the meaning of “professional” and obstacles to the professionalization of management**

The word “professional” is more than just a desirable attribute that designates work of high quality. There is almost a century-long tradition of research and the development of professions as a specific institutional structure, what might be called institutional clusters that distinguish a profession from other occupations, which in English is reflected in the difference between the words *profession* and *occupation* (Moskovskaia 2009, 2010). The emergence of professions comes about as a result of several prerequisites: (1) the increasingly thorough division of labor and the mass formation of technologically and intellectually complex forms of labor, coinciding with the development of industry run by machines; (2) the spread of scientific knowledge, as a result of which more and more kinds of complex labor depend on theoretical knowledge in one discipline or a group of disciplines; (3) public acknowledgment of the special contribution of particular kinds of complex labor to the creation of social goods and the public’s well-being, which also confers both trust and privileges on the professional group.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in the developed industrial economies of the West just about every sphere of complex intellectual labor strives for professional status or has already acquired it. The following processes are usually considered to be the signs of such status in the international literature on the study of professions:<sup>3</sup> (1) the establishment of a system of formalized knowledge on the basis of science disciplines that have been learned by way of a lengthy and standardized process of training (the acquisition of that knowledge is linked to the activity of the universities); (2) the

acquisition of a monopoly on the provision of services in a specific sphere of activity, which entails the exclusion of involvement by amateurs, while the right to engage in the activity is conferred by a document that certifies a profile education, generally a higher professional education; (3) the creation of mechanisms to exercise horizontal professional control over the work in the profile sphere for the purpose of making sure that it is in accord with the specifications and standards that are accepted in the professional community (essentially, control that has come into being on the basis of self-organization, involving professional associations and communities, universities, professional publications, and so on); (4) the formation of a professional ethics code based on the conviction of the special role of professional activity in pursuit of the social good; it connects those who are involved in the profession to the “professional corporation,” while it ensures the clients’ trust; (5) the existence of relative freedom of action in carrying out the professional activity (professional autonomy that is discernible even under conditions of a rigid organizational hierarchy).

The individual proficiency with which professional qualities are associated in Russia first and foremost (“professionalism” as it is used in our country) is both a necessary condition and the result of the functioning of the profession. At the same time, the necessity of profession as an institution is dictated by the need to ensure high quality of the services rendered by all participants in the professional corporation on a regular and predictable basis, which became important during the industrial era.

What can be pointed out as a result of comparing these features to the characteristics of management? First, with the exception of a professional education and the relevant science disciplines, the other cited features of profession have not been adequately developed in it. This is true not only in Russia but also in the United States, where professional management has the longest and most consistent history. Second, the need for the development of many of these features for management is often subject to doubt. This is illustrated by current debates as to whether management really is a profession or ought to be, debates that have proliferated in American journals in connection with the publication of R. Khurana’s book

about the history of the professionalization of management in the United States (“Can We Make Management a Profession?” 2007; “Is Management Really a Profession?” 2007; Khurana 2007).

What is this all about, and what are the obstacles to the professionalization of management?

The *first* block of problems has to do with the difficulties involved in the acquisition of a monopoly on the performance of management services and in the exclusion of “amateurism.” In spite of the extensive development of professional management education and the prestige of business schools, there has been no “closing” of the market in favor of professionals with managers’ diplomas.

A number of constraining factors account for this. First, there is the size of the business: for a small business there is no need for the management to be professionalized, since it reduces to zero all its advantages. Second, there are the national traditions of management careers: in a number of countries there are no mechanisms of vertical lift for midlevel managers of the kind that exists in the United States (Drucker 2008, p. 560). Very often, either top management does not have experience in day-to-day management and a profile education, or else midlevel management, given its lack of career prospects, does not enjoy professional status. All these factors hinder the formation of a consistent perception of management as a type of activity. Third, there is the absence of a direct connection between a business school diploma and effective management, which may be classified among mistakes in the choice of the conception of a management education (e.g., Bennis and O’Toole 2005; Mintzberg 2004), or may be attributed to the imperfection of the science of management (MacIntyre 2000, p. 122). Fourth, there are the serious specifics in particular kinds of activity, imposing greater demands on the sectoral knowledge of administrators, compared to “managerial” knowledge per se. In principle these are problems that are in need of individual studies devoted to testing the various hypotheses on the causes of such “specifics”—whether the specific character is linked to traditions that are deeply rooted in certain sectors, to technological characteristics, to the monopoly on the part of a different professional group, or to the type of “organizational configuration,” and so on.

Fifth, an additional obstacle to the “closing” of the market and the professionalization of managerial services is the situation in which the functions of ownership and management are not kept separate. It is no secret that this issue is an urgent one for Russia and for the former republics of the Soviet Union, in contrast to market economies that have been established for a long time. In the West the process of the separation of “function capital” from “ownership capital” was noted by Karl Marx, and by the beginning of the twentieth century it led to the shifting of a major portion of the functions of control from the owners to the managers, which made it possible to speak of “managerial capitalism” and the replacement of the “invisible hand” of the market by the “visible hand” of the managers (Chandler 1977) as distinguishing features of the entire twentieth century.

The *second* block of problems affecting the professionalization of management is linked to the difficulty of forming mechanisms of horizontal professional control and stable horizontal connections. Of chief importance is how to impart universal and systematic importance to the best individual practices, and how to ensure compliance with labor-quality standards of the specific professional community. The importance of that control for the professionalization of management parameters cannot be overstated: management is segmented by its nature owing to its attachment to a particular organization as well as competition among organizations, market changeability, differences in the positions and functions of managers, and the variable qualitative nature of the objects of the management. This is why professional associations in the sphere of management are for the most part an exception to the rules, while associations of employers are not very suited for that role.

Another aspect that causes difficulties in establishing the best practices is that there is no common single opinion in management as to who the “client” of its services is and what their purpose is; that is, the purpose of the improvement has not been defined. According to Drucker, the ultimate objective of the company’s activity is its customer. That approach is closest to the idea of professional management. In the everyday course of things, many managers consider recipients of their services to be their subordinates, their

superior, the board of directors, stockholders and, to a lesser extent, customers, in particular if they (the managers) do not have to deal directly with these customers. Because of this uncertainty as to the activity's ultimate recipient and purposes, it is hard to ensure unity of the managers' professional interests. In the absence of common professional interests, the practice of buying off bureaucrats can also be considered an "improvement measure"—as "management by the stakeholders." The change of objectives in the formation of management as a profession has been discussed by R. Abramov (Abramov 2005).<sup>4</sup>

This is not in conflict with the emergence of a large number of associations in specific fields that are similar to management, associations of personnel officers, recruiters, marketing specialists, business consultants, audit and accounting specialists, and so on. An analysis of this sphere and how it relates to management is beyond the scope of this article, although it is here that we can find the beginnings of new horizontal connections among science, education, and management practice. At the same time, most such associations do not perform the functions of professional associations, or merely go through the motions. Just about their only function is to monopolize the market, for which they generally draw up a set of "professional standards." To understand whether this represents the development of professional control or ordinary expansionism on the part of business, it is necessary to make a more detailed analysis, to see what base of professional knowledge it rests on, what structures support it, in whose interests decisions are made, and so on.

The universities as an institution of professional control are not able to make up for the lack of sufficient horizontal connections among managers, since there is no obligation for managers to maintain relations with a university after they graduate, even if the university offers supplementary professional education or business consulting, which does not happen often. Also, as we discuss below, the literature on management in the West is filled with complaints against the science of management found in the universities, as well as against the universities, claiming that they have not fulfilled the function of training professional managers satisfactorily.



## **Toward a critique of management education and the science of management**

P. Drucker was convinced that management represents an organized form of knowledge and can be subjected to analysis, study, and systematic improvement. But it has its own specifics. First, management can be engaged in only in an organization, and, second, it serves as a channel through which the work of personnel can be directed along the necessary lines to produce results (Drucker 2008, pp. 9–10, 495). Might the emphasis on the mediation of someone else's activity and an organization's changeable conditions create additional difficulties in the process of its professionalization?

Discussion along approximately the same lines, although with opposite conclusions, is found in the work of another management “guru,” H. Mintzberg. In his opinion, management is not so much a science (by which he means subject to formalization as professional knowledge) and more the result of art and experience. By way of proof, Mintzberg cites surveys indicating that managers spend 66–80 percent of their time on verbal communication, including meetings and telephone conversations. Specifically verbal communication rather than analytical reports and articles serve as the basic channel for obtaining business information. In Mintzberg's opinion, this should dispel many myths about the role of planning, calculation, and scientific analysis in the work of managers (Mintzberg 2009, p. 21).

Mintzberg does not deny the importance of business schools and the science of management, but he thinks today's American business schools are teaching “the wrong people the wrong things, with undesirable consequences” (Mintzberg 2004, p. 6). The wrong people, because those who come to business schools have a minimum of experience in management; the wrong things because business schools are holding on to the harmful illusion that it is possible to train a full-fledged manager in classrooms; undesirable consequences because graduates are trying to master a “science” (in the form of techniques of analysis) even though they do not have either experience or practical intuition. As a result, management ends up being separate from its subject and object. In Mintzberg's

opinion, to a considerable extent the bureaucratization of today's organizations is the consequence of an erroneous conception of a business education with the emphasis on scientific calculatability and formalization.

Other researchers also place the blame on the science for the low results of management activity. Earlier, academic criticism would point out that the level of manager training is lower than in other sciences, that the quality of applicants is lower at the outset, and that the content of business school programs is not sufficiently fundamental from the standpoint of university training (Abramov 2005, p. 168). More recently, however, the gist of the criticism is that management does not have any practical application as a fundamental science. Bennis and O'Toole apply the adjective "suicidal" to the model of recognizing academic achievements in faculties of management, a model that has been copied from the natural sciences (it utilizes a mathematical apparatus with statistical regressions, abstract financial and economic analysis, and so on). Instead of judging the results of their work according to the competencies of graduates or the ability of the faculties to understand the forces that drive the development of business, their assessment of results is oriented almost exclusively toward the "rigor of scientific studies," erroneously accepted as constituting standards of the "scientific character" of management (Bennis and O'Toole 2005, p. 98).

Their intention is not to reject the professional design for management but to renovate its model. The authors compare two variants of a professional design, a "scientific" one (on the natural sciences model) and a "professional" one (similar to medicine, with its orientation toward practice). They emphasize that they are not proposing a return to the schools of commerce of the early stage of management but rather a conversion to a *different* professional model in which science is not an end in itself but is oriented toward enhancing practical experience.

For its part, academic science criticizes business education first and foremost for being concerned only with short-term demands. From the standpoint of academic science, the pursuit of applicants and ratings has led to the shifting of the main resources of management education out of the field of the creation of knowl-

edge, research, and the training of doctoral students, and into the establishment of new offices and PR services oriented toward the short-term tasks of competing in the market of educational services. This latter circumstance is reflected in the change in strategy for training students, from an orientation toward the graduate's integral career to the needs of his "first job" (Zimmerman 2001). For the sake of fairness it is reasonable to say that these days, all university education suffers from similar flaws; it is appropriate to say that the university is in a crisis as an institution for the creation of universal knowledge (Fuller 2005).

There is also an ethical component of the criticism of present-day management and its scientific base. In the view of A. MacIntyre, for example, management proficiency, like other social sciences, is not a source of "plausible generalizations" and does not possess rigorous predictive power. A rather large role in this is played by the systematic distortion of the interpretation, stemming from the interests of the carriers of the proficiency—the managers (MacIntyre 2000, p. 122). On the other hand, the corporate scandals in the literature on management serve to strengthen the position of criticism of "ethical neutrality" that the economic sciences held on to for a long time, including management and management practices. The polemical power of this criticism is attested by the use of a poetic image in T.S. Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men," in which today's managers are represented as "hollow (or empty) men standing at the helm" and leading nowhere (Waddock 2004). Ethical criticism of management focuses attention on the importance of the question as to whose interests managers ought to serve and how to make them into adherents of that kind of essential social integration. This is how questions of ethics cause researchers to turn back to general questions of the theory of management, to what the content and the basic tasks of management and management education are (ibid.).

In much of the criticism of scientific management it is possible to discern criticism of the dominating economic paradigm at its basis. This refers to the neoclassical theory that, to some degree, is linked to corporate scandals such as Enron, and the fragmentation of managerial knowledge, and managers' inability (or refusal) to

recognize the systemic consequences of their decisions (*ibid.*).

This is one of R. Khurana's conclusions. At the beginning stages of the professional design of management, faith in the science served as the engine of its professionalization; these days, on the other hand, faith in the "neoliberal utopia" under the guise of science is hastening its deep professionalization. What Khurana means by a neoliberal utopia is scientific recognition of the "irreversible predominance of market stimuli over the random concerns and decisions of human beings, who include all the stakeholders of the companies with the exception of the shareholders" (Khurana 2007, pp. 363–64).

To what extent is the development of professional management in Russia a reflection of the logic and characteristic problems of the professionalization of management in the West?

### **The imperfection of the professional design of management in Russia**

There is a prevalent opinion that the professionalization of management in Russia is being hindered by the lack of social demand (Shemiatikhina 2007). This is a hasty conclusion. It is not hard to see, based on the rhetoric that bureaucrats purvey to voters, as well as on statements by journalists, Internet blogs, and common usage, that the terms "professional" and "professional management" are used as a desirable way to solve the most varied problems of Russian society, from enhancing the economy's ability to compete to the fight against corruption. It is an excellent societal environment for the development of a professional design, whether that has to do with schoolteachers, the police, or management. When it comes to motivating forces, the professional design is put into action by social groups that are in solidarity and unified by common interests and shared resources and a "dream." An analysis of the management literature in Russia indicates that the motive forces of professional design in Russia are to a large extent not prepared, and in cases where it has got under way at all, it is being developed in accordance with a scenario that has already been the object of mass criticism in the West. Let us examine a number of key aspects.

The *first* characteristic is the vagueness of specialists' ideas as to what constitutes the object and aim of managers' activity, as well as the specific nature of the current stage in the evolution of organizations that are able to decide on changes in the content and tasks of management. When it comes to key properties of management, various authors quite often focus on opposite things: innovativeness or predictability, knowledge or "art," individual leadership or group work, reliance on intuition or on the measurability of parameters, service to the interests of shareholders or to the task of developing the companies, of the innovative economy as a whole (Fridman 2009; Kol'chugina 2008; Mau and Seferian 2007; Vikhanskii and Naumov 2004). At the same time, in the course of analyzing particular aspects of management something more general is lost sight of, namely what constitutes its object, its specific character and its place among other types of labor or factors of production. Specialists' lack of interest in what constitutes the various forms of management weakens the explanatory possibilities of both the science and management education.<sup>5</sup>

The *second* characteristic is a replacement of the discussion of management education by the examination of formal questions and means of training. Discussed most often are the degree of development of active forms of instruction, the possibilities of students' access to distance learning, software, group size and course length, the type and appropriateness of the diplomas issued, affiliation with particular international institutes, and so on. The content of education is usually not brought up at all or is discussed in vague and lofty terms such as "to meet the challenges of today," to provide the knowledge of "up-to-date technologies of business management," to build "a model of competencies," to supply cadres for "innovative segments" of the economy, and so on.

*Third*, the topic of the formation of professional management is reduced to simply the acquisition of a professional education. This is a consequence of the fact that in Russia a profession is not viewed as a social institution or a social calling but a place in the labor market. This marks a step backward even in comparison with the ordinary interpretation of professionalism as a high quality of individual knowledge and abilities, since it leads to making the

diploma into an absolute value and reducing the responsibility of the diploma-holding specialist for the results of his labor. And yet, when it comes to improving management the importance of professionalization may be greater than it is for a number of other professions. This is due to its closeness to business as a means of extracting personal gain and its closeness to the organizational hierarchy as a bureaucratic system of power. Many contemporary theoreticians of management agree that “good” management must be effective, up-to-date, professional, or oriented toward the development of companies and should not fall into either of these two extremes, that is, slavish adherence to market forces or to bureaucratic interests; this can be seen clearly in the views of Drucker and Mintzberg. One regular means of resistance to these forces under the conditions of capitalism is the institution of the professions. Not by chance did E. Freidson call the complex of relations that maintain the stability and relative independence of professions an expression of an independent path, a “third logic” distinct from the “logic of the market” and the “logic of the bureaucracy” (Freidson 2001).

The difference between a professional education as an end in itself and professional education as a means of acquiring a profession lies in its purpose. The making of profit and the capitalization of companies cannot constitute the aim of the professional design, although they may be included among its participants’ array of goals. The history of the professionalization of management in the United States serves as an excellent example of this distinction in an environment where the achievement of individual success and leadership in business is an objective that is socially approved. They can even be considered the building materials of the American dream, but not as the purpose of management as a professional design. A founder of the Harvard Business School wrote in 1909:

I often hear businessmen say that we cannot teach business. I agree completely with them. We are not trying to teach business in the sense in which businessmen generally understand their routine activity, or in the sense of teaching young people “how to make money” or “how to beat competitors.” We are convinced that the foundation of business is science, and it is the teaching of the science and its development that we are interested in first and foremost.<sup>6</sup> (Khurana 2007, p. 97)

Unfortunately, there are no *common* goals that might serve as the ideology of a new professional design and help consolidate the management community that are of interest to practical workers and instructors of management in Russia, and none are linked to the creation of “professional management.”

A *fourth* characteristic is the absence among management professionals of any serious discussion and formulation of general principles and basic content, as well as mechanisms for their implementation, meaning in the broad sense professional standards (not to be confused with state educational standards). Attention needs to be focused specifically on the shortage of initiatives from the professional community, which to some extent can be accounted for by factors discussed above. At the same time, the actual striving for standardization of the work under the slogan of increasing “professional competencies,” observed widely in Russia in different spheres of activity, stems from business as employer and often overshadows business. The initiatives of employers are called on to make it easier for them to select and evaluate their personnel, which is fully justified. But they are not dictated by professional interests and improvement measures; the control is from “outside,” from the standpoint of market demand, in other words it is opposite to *professional* control as such. In Russia the great numbers of business initiatives in this field are an indication of the shortage of initiatives from within the professional community.

A few attempts to regulate the market of management services by newly formed professional associations appeared not long ago in a relatively small range of management specialties that are new to Russia, such as personnel management or auditing. On the one hand, their appearance must be rated positively as evidence of an awareness of a professional sense of identity of a portion of management and the development of mechanisms of professional self-organization. On the other hand, the splitting of management into individual “compartments,” with the result that instrumental types of activity end up going along with that process even though, owing to their newness, they are not provided with an adequate base of knowledge, may hinder the professionalization of management, since it is capable of replacing knowledge about the management

of an organization with a set of procedures and recipes. This danger becomes obvious in the absence of any search for general professional requirements in the sphere of the actual teaching of management, which, in terms of its designation, is called on to be responsible for the integration of knowledge and profession.

Yet another variant of pseudoprofessional standards is the “competence approach.” These days this is a kind of “sacred cow” both in education and in management. For all the importance of this approach when it comes to operationalizing the evaluation of workers and setting standards for them, the practice of according absolute importance to it is responsible for the increasing prevalence of the notion that professional knowledge can be put together from a set of blocks in any combination one would like. This relates both to the selection of courses by students in higher educational institutions and to the employer’s compilation of a list of requirements for the professional worker. In both cases the systematic character of the knowledge is relegated to the shadows, while the professional choice to be made is turned over to nonprofessionals, which in the first case would be students and in the second case, perhaps, employers.

When it comes to the standards to be drawn up by the professionals themselves in the field of management education, there has been practically no discussion of this theme in the literature. Or, more accurately, any discussions have been devoted basically to the unattainability of the ideal of business schools’ ratings by the mass media that exists in the West. This represents a contradiction. On the one hand, many college instructors and college administrators express concern over the decline in the quality of the professional education of managers, along with the need to ensure it is free of dilettantism. Certain basic and justified complaints against education include the absence of integration of educational and scientific activity, education and practice; the fragmentary character of knowledge; the high degree of borrowing of elements of Western theories without thinking them through and adapting them to the conditions of Russia; dogmatism; low requirements on the students’ knowledge; and others (Asaul and Manakov 2009; Knigin 2003; Lialin 2008; Shemiatickhina 2007). On the other hand, in the literature we



find hardly any proposals of mechanisms to solve these problems through the common efforts of the professional community. Quite the contrary: in the press we find discussions of solutions that shift responsibility for the control of the quality of education to public or civic structures (the introduction of independent public ratings similar to those in the *Financial Times* or *Business Week*), state structures (state accreditation of higher educational institutions, the compilation of official ratings of higher educational institutions), or business associations (Kat'kalo 2009; Lazarev 2006). Given the absence of horizontal professional interaction, the universities act almost exclusively as structures of the education business, some of which are better and some worse, but not as centers of professionalism.

*Fifth*, the lack of any serious interest in the professionalization of management on the part of business in this country. A first glance may give a different impression, especially in consideration of the active discussion of the cadre shortage and the [lack of] professional standards in recent years, the participation of business in numerous commissions and committees for the reform of education, and all the extensive rhetoric on the importance of everything that is “professional” in the life of business, the rendering of services, administration, and cadre training. Supposedly, evidence for a high level of demand for professional management is also provided by the high salaries of top managers, comparable to their Western colleagues. But on closer examination, many of these circumstances of dubious value, or have nothing to do with the professionalization of management.

First, the term “professional” is widely used in everyday speech in a rather offhand and random manner; it usually does not reflect any solid meaning except various shades of “good,” reflecting its use in advertising slogans. Second, discussions of professional management generally conceal a fixed perception of the administration of companies as a sphere of the struggle and efforts by talented individuals to move up to the top of the management pyramid, rather than planned actions by a group of people in a staff situation (Fridman 2009). A characteristic view of the professional manager is expressed this way: “In order for [a firm] to prosper there has to

be one super top manager responsible for the stability of the entire outfit (the director), a good top manager in charge of production, and a good top manager in charge of sales. If it is possible to have the luck to find and bring together three genuine musketeers” (from an interview with the organizer of a major Russian forum, see *Upravlenie personalom* 2007, no. 22).

Third, very often the discussion of professional administration comes down to nothing more than management software rather than interaction among professionals. Fourth, business executives do not place a high value on the qualifications and training of personnel, and hardly ever go by these factors when appointing and promoting specialists and management cadres (Efendiev and Balabanova 2009; Iukish 2008; Krasil'nikova 2007). This does not provide induce confidence in the idea of the creation of “new management cadres” for a “new economy” in Russia.

On the whole it is not hard to see that in Russian business, with regard to management, the approach that predominates is more like the Druckerian “boss over others” than a “team leader.” Contributing to this, on the one hand, is the persisting technological backwardness that has led to holding on to forms and structures of organization management that have gone out of fashion in industrially developed countries. On the other hand, any interest in the professionalization of management on the part of business is hindered by owners' active participation in the administration. They may view strong professional management not as a mechanism of control but rather as a competitor for control over enterprises.

At the same time, business is not all the same, and in certain groups there is an interest in the professionalization of management. The more time has passed since the beginning of the market transformations in Russia, the more diploma-holding managers come into companies and the more varied the problem of professionalization becomes. It no longer consists solely in acquiring a profile education but also involves assessing its actual and proper role in company management.

The implementation of a professional design for management in Russia is linked to the necessity of accomplishing many tasks; one of the most important may be mobilizing the various social

forces that have an interest in the professionalization of management, including management instructors and researchers, business consultants, and businesspeople. How persistent they are in the search for a common idea of the development of management and a platform for the harmonization of interests will determine the prospects not only of the economic development of individual companies but also the prospects of the modernization of Russia, which many desire. This is what is meant by the term “professional design” that has been used here.

## Notes

1. Cited on the basis of the results of the answers of a search system to the query “professional management.”

2. The correlation of the terms management and administration, business management and state administration, depends on the conception of management. Without dwelling on this topic, I want to focus on the fact that confining the discussion to the framework of industrialism and the market economy in the present article is justified by the point that it is during this era that the *spread* of the institution of professions has taken place. This does not cancel out that elements of professions can be found in the guild shops and academies of arts of the late Middle Ages. It is roughly within that time period that we can detect the sources of the birth of management, a time when, according to M. Weber, the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism were born, while according to M. Foucault the modern system of power relations began to take shape, in which the management of people took on the character of “normalization,” that is, the setting of norms, division into elements, and ordering. However, these and other expanded definitions of management are expressed by different terms in English, *administration*, *government* and, in Foucault’s conception, *governmentality*.

3. The conception of professions, and the features that have been cited here, are the result of an established convention by a majority of researchers of professions in the West. At the same time, the conception does not have just one indisputable founding father. With various reservations, authors generally refer to the authority of M. Weber, E. Durkheim, and T. Parsons, and, in connection with criticism of professions, to research in the 1970s and 1980s by, first and foremost, M. Larson, E. Abott, and E. Freidson. In recent times, later works on the systematization of the classical views have been used as apt definitions of professions (Sciulli 2008; Burrage, Jarausach, and Siegrist 1990).

4. R. Abramov’s book is a remarkable example of the application of the methodology of Anglo-Saxon studies of the professions to the analysis of management in Russia, and it merits very careful reading. At the same time, the author’s adoption of MacIntyre’s ethical philosophy, in my opinion, has prevented him from seeing the positive dynamic potential, in addition to a “moral fiction,” in the process of the professionalization of management in Russia.

5. There have been a few attempts to look at management from the standpoint of the whole in the Russian literature. However, in the case of a major portion of articles on management they are of a rather marginal character, and for any implementation of the tasks of its professionalization they are too abstract. Along with that, they show that the problem of management as a specific body of knowledge has not been resolved (see, e.g., Kagiurov 2008; Teslinov 2002).

6. The reliance on science reflects the ideals of the era, and it is not the only possible super-objective of the professional design; the emergence of the professions of physician or attorney at the turn of the nineteenth century was based on different aims. Most important, to ensure that the aim was focused on socially significant problems.

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